

DEPARTMENT OF STATE
ASSISTANT SECRETARY

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TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S

FROM: MR - Foy D. Kohler *FDK*

SUBJECT: Posing the Issues of Negotiations and our Attitude Towards the GDR

In response to your request arising out of our meeting earlier today, there follow brief statements of the issues involved in negotiations with the Soviets and in the formulation of our attitude towards the GDR, together with certain arguments pro and con.

The Issues:

Should we at the same time as we open discussion with our Allies about the military, economic and psychological program which we propose to mount suggest that we consider taking the initiative to enter into negotiations with the Soviets early in October? This could be announced at a relatively early date. Such negotiations might take the form of a Four-Power meeting of Foreign Ministers to prepare a peace treaty for Germany, or they might take the form of conference along the 1959 Geneva lines. In any case, the question of East and West German participation would probably arise.

Arguments pro:

1. This would be consistent with our basic position that, while we are entirely firm about the essentials of our position in Berlin, we are always prepared to engage in peaceful negotiations on a reasonable basis.
2. Our Allies will desire negotiations although the West Germans and the French would probably oppose discussion of a Peace Treaty, and such a conference would also be responsive to the inevitable pressures of world opinion.
3. Such negotiations might be used to gain time, to stretch out the progression from stage to stage of a Western build-up program, and to probe Soviet intentions.
4. If the Soviets had by this time become impressed with our firmness, such negotiations might at least be the starting point for meaningful discussions on Berlin.

Arguments con:

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Arguments con:

1. An early request for negotiations might be interpreted by the Soviets as an indication of weakness on the Western side.
2. The Germans and the French would probably oppose any idea of preparing for a peace treaty.
3. It seems unlikely that the Western Powers could agree prior to such an early conference on any substantive position which would be negotiable with the Soviets.
4. By underlining the irreconcilability of the Western and Soviet positions, the conference might accelerate rather than delay Soviet unilateral action against Berlin.

The Issue:

On the assumption that this will bear an important relationship to the likelihood of reaching agreement on Berlin in any negotiations with the Soviets, what should be the attitude of the U.S. towards the GDR? Specifically, how far can we go in recognition of the GDR in the effort to obtain an acceptable arrangement? If recognition would go too far, are there lesser measures worth further study such as an increase in relations between the Federal Republic and the GDR?

Arguments pro:

1. Since it is admitted that reunification of Germany is not a practicable goal of policy for the foreseeable future, we should adapt ourselves to this reality.
2. Since public opinion will not support refusal to deal with the "GDR" as a casus belli, we will simply have to take this into account.
3. This is a policy which the British have always supported, even though they have not expressed their views in recent years.
4. Recognition of the GDR in some form might actually be something we could exchange for a further period of stability on Berlin.

Arguments con:

1. The Germans and the French will probably not accept recognition of the GDR as an element of the Western negotiating position, and advocacy of it would have a disruptive effect within the Western Alliance. This will

likewise

likewise be true after the September 17 German elections.

2. Any arrangement on Berlin bought by recognition of the GDR could only be expected to last until the Soviets felt it expedient to bite off the next piece.

3. It is questionable whether, given the complexity of Soviet motives on Berlin and the contribution which Berlin as it now is makes toward instability in the satellite area, particularly the GDR, ~~WAS~~ anything we could do with respect to the GDR would actually buy a satisfactory arrangement on Berlin.

4. Acceptance of the GDR would mean our overt acceptance of the division of Germany. This abandonment of a symbol might produce a long-run danger of a revival of German nationalism seeking unification by force. It would also mean in effect, the jettisoning of a major component of post-war American policy towards Germany.

5. Since the GDR is such an obvious creation and continuing puppet of the Soviets, our recognition of it would make it difficult for us seriously to press the theme of self-determination elsewhere in the world.

nm
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7/17/61

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